

## MINUTES

### AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Audit Subcommittee of the Legislative Management Committee met in Room 131, State Capitol Building, Salt Lake City, Utah, September 16, 2002, from 10:00 a.m. until 10:45 a.m.

#### Committee Members Present:

Speaker Martin R. Stephens, Co-Chairman  
President Al Mansell, Co-Chairman  
Senator Mike Dmitrich  
Representative Brad King

#### Legislative Audit Staff:

Wayne L. Welsh, Auditor General  
John M. Schaff, Deputy Auditor General  
Rick Coleman, Audit Manager  
Tim Osterstock, Audit Manager  
Wayne Kidd, Lead Auditor  
Janice Coleman, Audit Supervisor  
Leslie Marks, Audit Supervisor  
Deanna Herring, Performance Auditor  
Ivan Djambov, Performance Auditor  
Lynda Maynard, Recording Secretary  
Camille Ahlstrom, Legislative Secretary

#### Other Interested Parties:

Robin Arnold-Williams, Ex. Director, Dept of  
Human Services (DHS)  
Richard Anderson, Director, Division of Child &  
Family Services (DCFS)  
Carol Sisco, DHS Public Information Officer  
Jack L. Green, Director, Liability Mgmt, DCFS  
Vanessa Thompson, DHS  
Janetha Hancock, Dir., Legal Compliance, DHS  
Steven H. Peterson  
Patrick Ogden, Associate Superintendent, Utah  
State office of Education (USOE)  
Cathy Dudley, USOE  
Larry Newton, USOE  
Eric C Isom, Leg. Administrative Asst., Senate  
Mark Andrews, Research Analyst, OLRGC  
Thor Nilsen, Fiscal Analyst  
Elyse Hayes, *Deseret News*  
Jacob Santini, *Salt Lake Tribune*

Nesreen Khashan, *Standard Examiner*  
Mike Riedel, *FOX 13*  
Jamie Cowen, *KUTV 2*  
*KTVX 4*

## 1. Call to Order

President Mansell called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes** Representative King made a motion that the minutes from the June 25<sup>th</sup> meeting be approved. The motion passed.

## 3. A Performance Audit of Child Welfare Caseworker Workload (Report #2002-05) Presented by Wayne Kidd, Lead Auditor

In accordance with *Utah Code* 62A-4a-118, our office has conducted its annual child welfare audit. The Child Welfare Legislative Oversight Panel asked the Legislative Auditor's Office to do a workload study of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) caseworkers. The main conclusions of this report are the following:

- Caseworkers allocate their time to multiple tasks
- Caseloads of 12 to 15 appear reasonable
- Some workload areas can be reduced
- Inconsistencies throughout DCFS should be addressed

We performed four different tests that helped us to understand the demands placed on caseworkers: 1) We shadowed caseworkers to learn their duties and the challenges they face. 2) We asked a sample of caseworkers from each of the five regions of DCFS to complete a time log for the month of March 2002. Caseworkers were asked to write down all activities or tasks. We then summarized how each caseworker spent his or her time and how much was spent on each case. 3) We organized five focus groups, one in each region, to discuss workload issues. 4) We also monitored three offices to look at the detailed operations of the offices.

Following the introduction in Chapter I, this report contains four chapters that each address one of the topics mentioned above. Each chapter is summarized below.

**Caseworkers Allocate Their Time to Multiple Tasks.** Documenting casework, visiting children and families, and traveling consume the majority of caseworkers' time. About 68 percent of caseworker time is available to work on their assigned caseloads after deducting time spent in training, on administrative tasks, and on personal leave. Casework involves much more than just visiting children and families, such as court appearances, developing plans for the clients and their families, and completing needs assessments, citizen reviews, and a lot of paperwork.

**Caseloads of Twelve to Fifteen Appear Reasonable.** We determined the reasonable number of cases that caseworkers can manage, given the current workload requirements and practices. We examined the three main case types that caseworkers manage: child protective services (CPS), out-of-home care services, and home-based services including—court ordered (PSS), and voluntary (PSC) services. On average, we believe 15 cases is a full load for CPS or home-based cases, and 12 cases is a full load for out-of-home cases. However, average caseloads are affected by staff turnover, required travel, sibling groups, and other factors.

**Strategies to Reduce Workload.** We suggest three areas that state policy-makers should consider to help reduce the high workload of DCFS caseworkers. First, caseworkers who manage out-of-home cases generally are required to visit the child at least twice per month. The second visit may not be needed and places Utah within a higher standard than other states. Second, a way to reduce the time caseworkers spend traveling to visit clients is to assign a courtesy supervision worker. The courtesy supervision program is an underutilized asset which DCFS should administer in a more formalized manner. Third, the level of documentation required by DCFS frustrates caseworkers because the more paperwork involved in a case, the less time a caseworker can spend providing the social work the children need.

The recommendations for reducing workload are listed below.

1. We recommend that the Division of Child and Family Services revise its policy on out-of-home care visits, considering the following options:
  - Eliminate the second monthly visit
  - Allow caseworkers to request a waiver from their supervisor and/or a regional administrator for each out-of-home child that does not need the second visit
  - Allow a professional from the child and family team (e.g. therapist, teacher, etc.) to complete the second monthly visit
  - Adopt a visit policy based on length of time since the last child visit (e.g., 30 days)
2. We recommend that the Division of Child and Family Services consider two changes to the courtesy supervision program:
  - Amend DCFS policy governing courtesy supervision to be separated from the transfers area, as well as clarify vague language to more accurately reflect the intent of the courtesy supervision program

- Change the courtesy supervision policies to include both inter- and intra-regional courtesy supervision to encourage the most efficient use of caseworker resources
3. We recommend that the Division of Child and Family Services consider the options suggested in this chapter, as well as their own options, to reduce paperwork, including the following:
- Reduce the number of forms
  - Shorten forms by making them more succinct
  - Enhance transcription and E-SAFE options
  - Provide laptop computers
  - Coordinate with other agencies to reduce the number of forms which share the same information
  - Allow “canned” responses to common questions

**Inconsistencies Should Be Addressed.** We found many differences and inconsistencies throughout DCFS that division management or legislators should address. Some differences are appropriate because they result from local factors that vary throughout the state. However, other differences may be unintended consequences of inconsistent policies and practices at the division, region, office and caseworker levels. Inconsistencies that we found during the audit that need to be addressed include:

- Caseloads vary by region
- Better resource distribution policy is needed
- Practices with ungovernable youth vary throughout state
- Western region’s pilot assessment format could be applied statewide to lower priority referrals
- Inconsistent caseworker practices result from policy confusion
- Use of caseworker assistants and interns vary by office

The recommendations to resolve these inconsistencies are listed below.

1. We recommend that the Division of Child and Family Services develop a well-documented needs-based approach to distributing resources to regions.
2. We recommend that the Division of Child and Family Services study and develop recommendations to address the issue of ungovernable youth placed in their custody.
3. We recommend that the Division of Child and Family Services consider applying the Child and Family Assessment format to low priority referrals.
4. We recommend that the Division of Child and Family Services complete its ongoing policy revisions as soon as possible.
5. We recommend that the Division of Child and Family Services clarify the job description of caseworker assistants to ensure a more efficient and effective use of their time in helping caseworkers with their workload.
6. We recommend that the Division of Child and Family Services expand their intern pool by actively networking with local colleges and universities.

### **Discussion following presentation:**

Robyn Arnold-Williams, Executive Director, DHS, expressed appreciation to the auditors for their work. She told the Audit Subcommittee that this area is particularly important during tight budget times and it has been helpful in preparing the Fiscal Year 2004 budget. Robyn concluded by saying that the policy board assigned to this division has already taken steps to implement the recommendations.

Richard Anderson, Director, DCFS, addressed the audit findings. Mr. Anderson said that the information provided in the audit matched many of the things that the division was finding.

He went on to say that the only recommendation that the division struggles with is the recommendation for “canned” responses; that they are moving in another direction for unique and individualized services because people are different and there are unique needs in each family.

Mr. Anderson said that the following summarizes the divisions action to the audit findings:

- **Phase I. Determination of Time Available for Casework.** There are certain caseloads that are heavier than others and the division is trying to weight those between workers. The proposal is to study the impact of the change in requirements on caseworkers and determine the total amount of effort required to provide casework at a quality required by the division.
- **Phase II. Focus Group Approach to Workload Analysis.** The division will enlist focus groups to provide their estimate of time required for each activity identified for completing a case.
- **Phase III. Random Case Analysis.** The division desires to continue the time study done by the auditors. A random selection of sample cases in each service category will be pulled and the workers will be asked to maintain a log identifying the actual amount of time spent on each identified activity. This will include both new and on-going cases.
- **Phase IV. Analysis of Data and Action Steps.** The division will develop action steps to determine activities that can be eliminated or simplified. Additional steps will be implemented to equalize workloads.

Mr. Anderson concluded by telling the Audit Subcommittee that there may be legislative changes needed to lessen the paperwork requirements and perhaps something could be presented in the next legislative session to address this issue.

Motion: Speaker Stephens made a motion that the **Performance Audit of Child Welfare Caseworker Workload** (Report #2002-05) be accepted and sent to the Health and Human Services Interim Committee, and the Child Welfare Reform Legislative Oversight Panel. The motion passed.

### **3. Best Practices Second Annual Survey Results**

Leslie Marks, Audit Supervisor, presented a summary of the Best Practice activity that has been conducted since inclusion in the **Utah Code**.

- As directed by legislative action, the Legislative Auditor's office has given new program managers a brochure of best practices for their use when setting up their programs. The Uranium Mill Tailings Oversight Program is the only new program this year.
- A required self-evaluation, from the program managers, at the end of their first year and again at the end of their second year of activity was received by the Legislative Auditor's office. This self-evaluation is used to determine whether a limited scope audit recommendation should be presented to the Audit Subcommittee. Currently there are no recommendations for any audits.

The Legislative Auditor's office is working to have the self-evaluation survey process computerized so that the respondents can complete their surveys electronically.

### **4. Textbook Monitoring Interim Report**

Janice Coleman, Audit Supervisor, presented a progress report on the request for textbook monitoring. Janice said that the auditors have been asked to collect three years worth of data and that the time period has not yet expired.

Janice told the Audit Subcommittee that the following are concerns that have been identified with the data that is being received:

- Most districts are not reporting specifically on their textbooks. They continue to report on both textbooks and supplies, combining the figures.

- There are concerns with the reliability of the information coming in. When matching the funding sources that were reported to the State Office of Education (SOE) in FY97, FY98 and FY99, to the funding sources that were reported to the Legislature for the same period, the information did not match.
- The districts seem to be slow in reporting their information. The deadline for the districts reporting to the State Office of Education is August 1<sup>st</sup>. The State Office of Education's deadline to report to the Legislature is October 1<sup>st</sup>. When checking with the State Office of Education in September, only half of the districts had reported.

After discussing this concern with one of the larger districts, the district representative said the August deadline is very hard to meet and it is a struggle to get the information in to the SOE.

## **5. Audit Requests**

Wayne Welsh, Auditor General, told the Audit Subcommittee that there will be two audits ready for presentation in November; one audit in December, and one audit ready in January.

Mr. Welsh identified a concern regarding the Tax Commission Collections audit currently being done. He said that in July a request was received from the chair of the Transportation Joint Appropriation Committee asking the Auditor General's office to look at the costs incurred by the Tax Commission for collecting gasoline taxes. The concern was that the Tax Commission was charging, inappropriately, the transportation fund for these costs. Since the Auditor General's office is doing the audit of the Tax Commission, this request has been included and he should be able to report on the findings.

Speaker Stephens expressed concern that the audit requests for UPASS and the U-Tax Project would not be ready by the beginning of the next legislative session. Wayne told Speaker Stephens that he would do his best to get these two audits completed; however, it would depend on the definition of the scope of the audit requests and what findings were there.

## **6. Adjournment**

President Mansell adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.